

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 10344

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CB UN

SUBJECT: GKR CREDENTIALS AT UNGA; POSSIBLE UN FACTFINDING
MISSION

REF: A. USUN 2702

B. USUN 2703

1. THE IDEA ADVANCED BY THE AUSTRALIAN PERMREP AND
SUPPORTED BY INDONESIAN PERMREP AT NEW YORK THAT THE UN
DISPATCH A FACTFINDING MISSION TO CAMBODIA TO REPORT BACK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION
(REFTEL A) RAISES BROADER QUESTION OF WHETHER IT IS IN
OVERALL USG INTEREST TO GET UNITED NATIONS DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN CAMBODIA. SINCE KHMER AMBASSADOR TO UN HAS
ALREADY SOLICITED REPLY FROM HIS GOVERNMENT (REFTEL B),
I EXPECT PRIME MINISTER WILL SEEK MY VIEWS IN VERY
NEAR FUTURE. FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM, WHO HAS
JUST RETURNED TO PHNOM PENH, TOLD ME LAST NIGHT
THAT PRIME MINISTER IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS
RECEIVING A UN FACTFINDING MISSION. IT WOULD BE
MOST HELPFUL TO RECEIVE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO
SUGGESTION AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

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2. WITHOUT ADDRESSING MYSELF IN DEPTH TO THE PROBLEM, I RECALL THAT BOTH ON VIETNAM AND ON LAOS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE OPPOSED UN INVOLVEMENT. IN THE CASE OF VIETNAM, ARGUMENT COULD BE MADE THAT NEITHER VIETNAM CONTESTANT WAS MEMBER OF UN, THEREFORE UN SHOULD STAY OUT. AS FOR LAOS, PATHET LAO HAD NEVER CONSTITUTED THEMSELVES INTO GOVERNMENT AND NEVER DISPUTED LAO SEAT IN THE UN. IN THAT RESPECT, CAMBODIA IS DIFFERENT BOTH FROM LAOS AND FROM VIETNAM. WHETHER UN LIKES IT OR NOT, TWO KHMER SIDES WHICH BOTH CLAIM TO REPRESENT CAMBODIAN NATION SEEK CAMBODIAN SEAT IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND HENCE BOTH KHMER SIDES LOOK TO THE UN TO SUPPORT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CAUSES.

3. WE DO NOT HAVE STAFF HERE TO STUDY IN DEPTH THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST UN SUBSTANTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN RESOLVING KHMER PROBLEM. HOWEVER, MY VISCERAL REACTION IS THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO ACCEPT A UN ROLE IN CAMBODIA THAN FOR HANOI, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE NVA MAINTAINS MILITARY FORCES IN CAMBODIA AND THE USG DOES NOT. WE BELIEVE IT LIKELY THAT GRUNK/FUNK WOULD DECLINE TO ACCEPT A UN FACTFINDING MISSION, BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF NVA FORCES ON THAT SIDE AND FOR OTHER REASONS.

4. SENDING A UN FACTFINDING MISSION TO CAMBODIA WOULD PROBABLY MERELY BE THE BEGINNING OF UN INVOLVEMENT. IF THIS FACTFINDING MISSION WERE TO BE FOLLOWED BY A RESOLUTION IN THE UNGA IN THE FALL CALLING ON THE TWO KHMER SIDES TO NEGOTIATE, WITHOUT ADDRESSING ITSELF SPECIFICALLY TO WHO SHOULD OCCUPY CAMBODIAN UN SEAT, I THINK ON THE WHOLE THIS TACTIC WOULD BENEFIT PHNOM PENH. IF THE FACTFINDING MISSION NEVER COMES ABOUT BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION OF PEKING, HANOI OR OTHER SUPPORTERS OF SIHANOUK, AT LEAST PHNOM PENH WOULD RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ITS POSITIVE POSTURE IN SEARCH OF PEACE.

5. REGARDING THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE "NON-ALIGNED MISSION," CHHUT CHHOEUR WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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QUITE RIGHT TO INSIST ON A BALANCED MAKEUP AND THAT YUGOSLAVIA, SENEGAL AND ALGERIA DO NOT MEET THIS CRITERION. ALL THREE OF THE COUNTIES MENTIONED ARE SUPPORTERS OF GRUNK AND COULD THEREFORE HARDLY BE CONSIDERED "NON" ALIGNED" ON THE KHMER QUESTION.

6. IN CONCLUSION, I SEE MERIT IN PURSUING THE IDEA OF A UN FACTFINDING MISSION. IF IT CAME ABOUT IT

WOULD HELP THE GKR RATHER THAN THE GRUNK. IF IDEA
WERE REJECTED BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION FROM THE OTHER
SIDE, GKR WOULD ENHANCE ITS CONCILIATORY IMAGE
THROUGH HAVING ACCEPTED PROPOSAL WHILE OTHER SIDE WOULD
ONCE AGAIN HAVE LABELLED ITSELF BELLICOSE AND
INTRANSIGENT.
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